

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS**

**November 19, 2013**

Addressing Educational Attainment and Developing a Competitive Workforce through the L.A. Compact

The importance of an educated workforce is fundamental to the local, state, and global economy. According to a report by the Public Policy Institute of California, California will require one million college graduates by 2025 in order to meet the projected demand upon the state's workforce. A recent report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education found that the United States lags far behind its counterparts in preparing its potential workforce to be competitive in a global economy. In addition, for many individuals, educational attainment is a pathway to the middle class and has a direct impact on the economic security and social mobility for children and families. Yet, according to a recent report from the Campaign for College Opportunity, California is rapidly becoming far less educated than other states despite it being the eighth largest economy in the world. According to the California Legislative Analyst's Office, more than 1 out of every 10 Californians over 24 years old has less

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YAROSLAVSKY \_\_\_\_\_

KNABE \_\_\_\_\_

ANTONOVICH \_\_\_\_\_

RIDLEY-THOMAS \_\_\_\_\_

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than a ninth grade education, and an additional 9 percent of Californians over 24 years old have attended high school but lack a high school diploma.

Addressing educational attainment from early childhood education through adulthood must be a public policy priority. The economic and societal benefits of educational attainment have a significant impact on earning potential, employability, civic participation, health, and mental health. By contrast, failure to invest in outcomes that drive educational attainment can have significant consequences and impact crime rates and the overall economy, and may result in dependency on public services. Low-income students and students of color are the most at risk of suffering the consequences associated with a lack of educational attainment as they comprise 57% of students in California according to The Education Trust – West. In Los Angeles County (County), over two-thirds of K-12 students are low-income and nearly one-fourth are English Language Learners (ELL). Further, while 75% of students in the County graduate high school in four years, only 40% of graduates have fulfilled the A-G requirements, which enable them to enroll in a four-year public university in California.

Efforts must be made to ensure that all of the students in the County have equal access to pathways that expand their opportunities. Over three decades ago only 28% of American jobs required a college degree. By 2018, more than 60% of jobs will require some college education yet, in the County, 64% of adults over age 25 do not have an Associate's degree or higher. This represents approximately four million

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workers that will be less competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. This education and skills gap threatens the economic competitiveness of the region.

The L.A. Compact is a commitment to change the paradigm of education and prepare students for college and the 21<sup>st</sup> century global workforce. Its signatories include leaders from the education, business, civic, labor, and non-profit sectors, including the Executive Director of First 5 LA, the President of United Way Los Angeles, and the Presidents or Chancellors of eleven institutions of higher education that include USC, UCLA, Pepperdine University, CSU Northridge, and CSU Los Angeles. The Mayor of the City of Los Angeles as well as the President of the City Council are also signatories.

Signatories to the L.A. Compact have committed to working together to leverage resources, coordinate services, improve public policies, and system improvements in order to ensure that all students: (1) graduate from high school; (2) have access to and are prepared for success in college; and (3) have access to pathways to sustainable jobs and careers. Accordingly, a collaborative approach with the County would significantly expand the capacity to improve education and workforce development outcomes throughout the Los Angeles region, and particularly for youth involved with the County's child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

**I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

- 1) Direct the Chief Executive Officer to engage a working group consisting of representatives from the Los Angeles County Office of Education, Los

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Angeles County Workforce Investment Board, Probation Department, Department of Children and Family Services, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and other relevant stakeholders to review the L.A. Compact and make recommendations on strategic opportunities for the County with the L.A. Compact partners, with a goal of facilitating cross-system collaboration that effectuates improvements in accessing quality education, including post-secondary education, and career development and training.

- 2) Direct the Chief Executive Officer to report back in 90 days in writing on the status of the working group and recommendations in support of the L.A. Compact.
- 3) Direct the Chief Executive Officer to transmit a five-signature letter to the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce stating the Board's support for the L.A. Compact.

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